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Patrick Moran – President

Testimony Motor Vehicle- School Vehicle Drivers-Medical Examination
Judicial Proceedings
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Support

Thank you, Chairman Smith, and Vice Chair Waldstreicher for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 63 which requires a school vehicle driver to pass an appropriate medical examination before employment and once during each 2 years of employment.

It is common for states to mandate that school bus drivers undergo regular medical examinations to ensure they are physically fit and capable of safely operating a school bus. The medical examinations often include assessments of vision, hearing, general health, and other factors that may affect a driver's ability to operate a school bus.

AFSCME Council 3 representing bus drivers in Baltimore County are currently required to go through a medical examination before being hired and each year as required by the counties. Requiring bus drivers to undergo a medical examination is not only important but necessary to protect the safety of our kids and our bus drivers as well.

The school years continue to be marked by severe transportation problems across Maryland school districts and the bus driver shortages are getting worse, with some describing the situation as severe. But while school bus driver shortages are more pronounced than in years past, they are hardly new. Before the pandemic, staffing shortages were causing our members to do double work. We must address the understaffing issues concerning school bus driver shortages in Maryland by increasing pay and finding ways to attract drivers to the profession. In Baltimore County, the school board found ways to assist drivers with paying for the cost of taking the medical examination before hiring and other certifications that are needed.

We should consider legislation, whether in this bill or a separate bill, that would require employers to shoulder the cost of initial medical examinations for job applicants seeking to become bus drivers. Initial medical examinations vary in cost and not all prospective employers are willing to pay this cost for their potential employees. Removing this cost barrier would be an additional tool to recruit individuals to become bus drivers. SB63, we believe is good common-sense legislation that aims to protect our children, but also the well-being of the school bus driver.

For these reasons urge a Favorable report on SB 63.

